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Syphilis Cases in The District Fall

Syphilis, a sexually transmitted disease that is on the verge of elimination in the United States, is also down dramatically in Washington. The number of cases reported in the District is at the lowest levels seen in almost 60 years.

The drop in Washington mirrors the national trend, according to statistics released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta.

Washington reported 81 primary and secondary syphilis cases last year, down 31 percent from 117 cases in 1997, officials with the District's Bureau of STD control said.

"We're most definitely happy that the numbers have dropped," said Peter Moore, acting chief of the bureau. "But if we're going to completely eliminate the disease, we still have a lot more work to do."

Among cities of over 200,000 population nationwide, Baltimore had the most syphilis cases reported in 1998 with 456. Chicago was second with 364, followed by Memphis, Tenn. with 260; Nashville, Tenn. with 210; and Phoenix with 173.

Maryland recorded 648 cases last year, a 27-percent decrease from the 891 cases in 1997. Virginia had 149 cases last year, down 37 percent from the 237 cases reported in 1997.

Syphilis is a venereal disease transmitted by sexual contact or contracted by an unborn child from its mother's blood. It is a curable disease that can easily be treated by antibiotics.

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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

D.C. Conducts Community Needs Assessment

In recent years, Bureau of STD Control efforts have led to significant progress in reducing the incidence of gonorrhea and early syphilis in the District of Columbia, although much work remains to be done. Even though reported syphilis and gonorrhea morbidity has been declining for the last several years, the rates of infection are still unacceptably high.

In October The Bureau collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct a community needs assessment. CDC provided training and technical support to Bureau staff and volunteers from the Oklahoma City Department of Health, the DC Agency for

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